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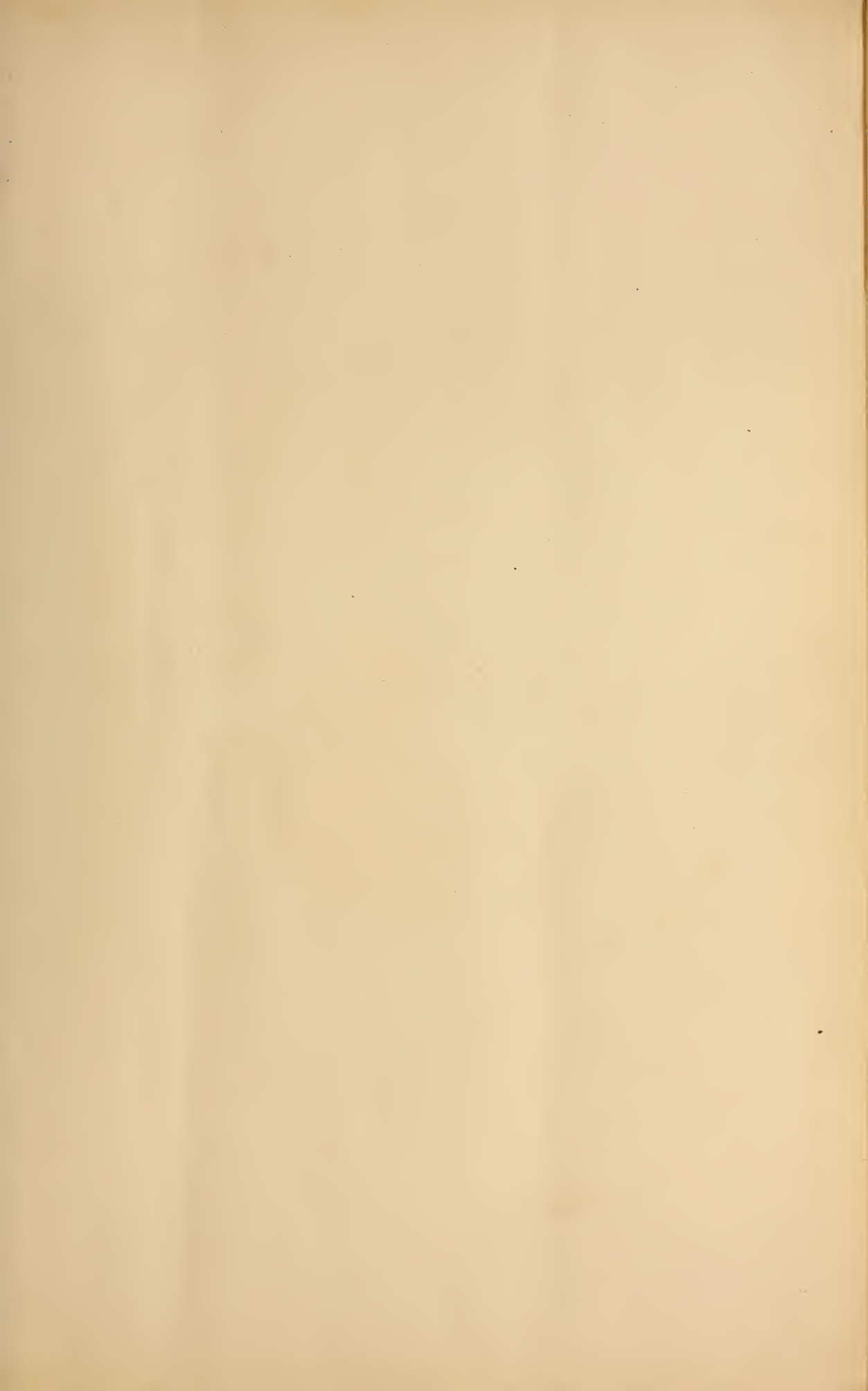
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LYMAN C. DRAPER.





Hyman C. Draper

BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCH
OF
LYMAN C. DRAPER, LL. D.
SECRETARY

OF THE
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN,

BY
Prof. RASMUS B. ANDERSON,

OF THE WISCONSIN UNIVERSITY.



FROM THE "ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF DANE CO., WISCONSIN."

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THE career of a literary man is usually suggestive of a quiet, uneventful life, devoid of the heroic excitements of war, or the adventurous incidents of the explorer of new worlds, or of the pioneer settler of the wilderness. The following sketch is no exception to this general rule; and yet the almost three-score and ten years accorded to him whose life-work we propose to portray, present a picture of varied interest, of which few countries, save our own, can furnish an example.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

LYMAN C. DRAPER, oldest son of Luke and Harriet (Hoisington,) Draper, and of the fifth generation from James Draper, who settled at Roxbury, Mass., about 1650, was born ^{above} ~~at~~ the mouth of ^{Fike} ~~Eighteen-Mile~~ Creek, ^{near} ~~on~~ the shore of Lake Erie, in the ^{then} town of Hamburg, ^{now Evans} Erie Co., N. Y., Sept. 4, 1815. His paternal grandfather, Jonathan Draper, served in the Revolutionary war in the main army under Washington, while his maternal grandfather, Job Hoisington, lost his life in the defense of Buffalo against the British, Dec. 30, 1813; and during that war, his father was twice taken prisoner by the British on the Niagara frontier. His parents removing to Springfield, Erie Co., Penn., when he was three years old, he was first sent to school there; they then settled in the incipient village of Lockport, N. Y., on the line of the Erie canal, in the spring of 1821, where he, for the ensuing eight or ten years, attended the best schools of that day; worked a year or two on his father's farm, repairing the shoes of the family; in their season, picking and selling blackberries at six cents a quart; and one summer carrying brick in the erection of buildings, at twelve and a half cents a day. He subsequently engaged for awhile in clerking in mercantile establishments.

Libraries in that region of Western New York were then unknown, but occasionally a book could be borrowed. Soon after its issue, in 1831, he succeeded in getting the loan of Campbell's *Annals of Tryon County, or Border Warfare of New York*, and of Rogers' *Journals of the French War, and Life of Gen. Stark*, and succeeded in purchasing Thatcher's *Indian Biography* and *Indian Traits*—works replete with thrilling incidents of Indian and Tory warfare; and reading them with avidity, they awakened in his mind a love for narratives of border adventure that largely gave direction to his subsequent tastes and pursuits.

While at Lockport, he saw La Fayette on his visit to this country, in 1825; De Witt Clinton, Gov. Cass, and other notable characters. Even at that early day, such Seneca chiefs as Major Henry O'Bail, Tommy Jimmy, and others whom he met, made a strong impression on his youthful mind. His first school composition was on the services and character of the good La Fayette, and his first article for the press was on Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last of the immortal signers, whose death had recently occurred, written in February, 1833, and published in the *Rochester Gem*, a literary paper, of April 6th of that year. To this and other papers and magazines he afterwards frequently contributed.

In the autumn of 1833, he went to Mobile, Ala., at the invitation of Peter A. Remsen, a cotton factor there, who had married his cousin; and in May, 1834, he left that city, passing through New Orleans and up the Mississippi, while there were yet many cases of cholera, and went to Granville College, Ohio, remaining there over two years.

His parents having removed from Lockport to Toledo, Ohio, he visited them at the latter place during vacation, in the summer of 1835, and took part with the Buckeyes in a little skirmish with the Wolverines, pleasantly called at that day "the battle of

Mud Creek," in the environs of Toledo, one of the episodes of the Ohio and Michigan boundary difficulty of that period. On the 6th and 7th of September in that year, a body of over eleven hundred men from Michigan, under command of Gen. Brown and Gov. Mason, entered Toledo to prevent the first court from organizing under Ohio authority; the organization, however, was quietly effected, and the troops had all retired by the 9th of the month. While in Toledo, the Michigan men boasted jocularly of having on the route there drafted numerous potato tops, the bottoms patriotically volunteering; and, during their sojourn there, they made several valiant raids on potato patches and chicken coops, and on Col. Stickney's orchard, burning his rail fences and attacking his ice-house.

A few days after, one bright morning about daybreak, on the 15th of September, a party of mounted Wolverines, reported in a Detroit paper to have been sixteen in number, stealthily entered Toledo, and captured at their residences Dr. N. Goodsell, Judge Wilson, Capt. Jones, and Mr. Davis, charged with the high crime of having accepted civil office under Ohio; or, as the Michigan people termed it, "exercising foreign jurisdiction;" the unwilling captives were thrust into a covered wagon, and rapidly driven toward Monroe, crossing the low bottom of Mud Creek over a corduroy road, where La Grange street now is.

But the alarm was immediately given, and the military company of some twenty citizens, under the leadership of Capt. C. G. Shaw, promptly rallied and hastened in pursuit; young Draper ran along with the company, and one of the men, much debilitated by ague and fever, lagging behind, handed his rifle and accouterments to Mr. Draper, saying the gun was loaded with two balls. Starting from the little hotel just east of Dr. Fassett's, Shaw's party endeavored to cut across through the bushes and unoccupied ground, hoping to head off the Michigan sheriff's *posse*,

and recover the prisoners before they should reach the point where La Grange street now crosses the old canal ; but, though they ran at a pretty fast trot, they failed in this. Reaching the high ground on the southern edge of the marsh or bottom skirt-ing Mud Creek, some little distance west of La Grange street, the Toledo company descried the retreating Michigan mounted party, with their wagon-prison, just emerging from the corduroy road and rising the opposite bank, the intervening distance a pretty long shot.

The sheriff, or some other leader of the Michigan party, wheeled his horse as he reached the top of the ascent, and yelled back some sort of bravado, wanting to know, forsooth, if the Michigan authorities had not a legal right to apprehend whom they pleased. His speech was received with derision, and, about simultaneously, the respective parties exchanged several shots, Draper firing off his rifle with the rest, but purposely over-shooting, not caring, by any possibility, to do any harm, especially in an affair of this kind. Bullets whistled, twigs and splinters fell from the scattering trees, among the Ohio men. One young Toledo printer, Morrison H. Burns, was in desperate earnest, loading and firing two or three times, taking deliberate aim across a large oak stump. It was afterward reported that Mr. Wood, the Michigan sheriff, was shot through the arm, and a horse of his party wounded ; at all events, some villainous gunpowder was burned, and a big time was had, and the Ohio heroes returned to the village with flying colors and no little *eclat*, while the redoubtable Michiganders scampered off at their best speed. From this little experience, Mr. Draper drew the conclusion that in battles and skirmishes generally, there are so many circumstances to attract the attention, that few ever give themselves any thought of personal danger.

It will, no doubt, surprise not a few of Mr. Draper's many friends to learn from this little reminiscence of forty-five years

ago, that he, in common with his fellow-riflemen, was branded a "rebel"—so, at least, the *Michigan Sentinel* proclaimed it at the time. "After the sheriff and a part of the *posse* had left," said the *Sentinel*, "a band of armed rebels, comprising the scum of Toledo, stationed themselves on an elevated piece of ground a short distance this side of the lower town, and commenced a brisk fire of 'riflery' upon five or six of our men as they were returning homeward. The balls whistled in every direction about their heads;" and then adds, "The fire was returned."

Elias Fassett, Esq., who was a youth at the time of this occurrence, and, with other lads, followed the Toledo party at a respectful distance in the rear, and has resided in Toledo ever since, states that Mr. Draper is believed to be the only survivor of Capt. Shaw's company. Capt. Shaw himself was one of the earliest adventurers for California when the gold mines were discovered, but sickened and died somewhere on the plains without reaching that land of promise. As matters began to assume a serious aspect, as the newspapers at the time expressed it, the General Government settled the difficulty by conceding to Ohio her territorial claim, and granting to Michigan, as an equivalent therefor, a much larger territory on the southern border of Lake Superior, comprising what is now divided into nine counties, rich in mineral resources. Thus ended the "Toledo war," a source of no little trouble while it lasted, as well as of many a gibe and joke. But by this unnatural assignment of territory west of Lake Michigan to the new State of Michigan, the subsequent State of Wisconsin was deprived of a large and valuable region which would otherwise have been included within her boundaries.

In the autumn of 1836, Mr. Draper left Granville for Hudson River Seminary, located near Stockport, Columbia Co., N. Y., remaining there a year, when he went to reside in the family of his patron and friend, Mr. Remsen, near Alexander, Genesee, Co., in the western part of that State, privately pursuing his studies and an extensive course of reading.

While residing in Mobile, he made a beginning of collecting unpublished facts and traditions connected with border history and biography—securing, in this instance, events and incidents pertaining to the daring Creek chief Weatherford,—a habit which for nearly fifty years he has practiced with most remarkable success. And while at Granville, he became interested in the border works of Doddridge, Withers, McClung, Flint, and afterward of Hall; and, finding them oftentimes at variance with each other, he conceived the idea, in 1838, of a work on the Western pioneers, hoping by assiduous study to be able to rectify many of these defects and errors. This led to a correspondence with such men as Hon. Hugh L. White and Col. William Martin, of Tennessee; Hon. Joseph R. Underwood, Col. Richard M. Johnson, Col. Charles S. Todd, Maj. Bland W. Ballard, and Dr. John Croghan, of Kentucky; ex-Gov. David Campbell, of South-west Virginia; Dr. Daniel Drake, Dr. S. P. Hildreth, and Col. John McDonald, of Ohio; Hon. William C. Preston, of South Carolina, and many others,—which resulted in a large accumulation of historic materials, and multiplied references to other persons, many of them aged pioneers scattered throughout the West and South-west; so that repeated journeys became necessary to visit and interview these venerable survivors of the early settlement and Indian wars of the Western country.

Since 1840, these journeys have aggregated more than 60,000 miles, by public conveyances, on horseback, and on foot; with knapsack and note-books; interviewing the companions and descendants of Dunmore, Andrew Lewis, Clarke, Boone, Kenton, Shelby, Sevier, the Campbells, Cleveland, Sumter, Pickens, Robertson, Crawford, Brady, the Wetzels, Tecumseh the Shawanoe chief, and the famous Joseph Brant of the Mohawks, securing many original diaries and manuscripts, making a unique and unequalled collection of original historic materials, filling well-nigh 250 manuscript volumes, and covering the whole

sweep of the Anglo-American settlements, and border warfare of the West, from the first fight in the Virginia valley, in 1742, to the death of Tecumseh at the Thames, in 1813, and the defeat of Weatherford and the Creeks, the following year.

In 1840, Mr. Draper went to Pontotoc, in Northern Mississippi, where he edited a weekly paper for awhile; then, in connection with Charles H. Larrabee, a fellow-student at Granville, and since a judge and member of Congress from Wisconsin, he tried rough farming life, in a rude, floorless, and windowless cabin, for one season, living on sweet potatoes, corn-meal cakes, bacon and coffee—fifteen miles from a post office; and was there chosen a justice of the peace. In 1842, he went to Buffalo, serving as clerk in the Canal Superintendent's office for a year; then returned to Pontotoc for a season, journeying among the pioneers, and finally, in 1844, again becoming a member of Mr. Remsen's family, then residing near Baltimore, and subsequently in and near Philadelphia, maintaining the while an extensive historical correspondence, making frequent journeys in the Western and South-western States, and gathering a unique Library of books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspaper files, illustrative of border history; and for the special purpose for which it is designed, it is confessedly the most valuable collection ever brought together.

Mr. Remsen, his patron and friend of many years, dying in the spring of 1852, Mr. Draper, with Mr. Remsen's family, whose widow he subsequently married, removed to Madison, Wis., in the fall of that year, where he has since continued to reside. In January, 1853, he was chosen one of the Executive Committee of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin; and, the year following, its Corresponding Secretary and editor of its publications; and has, during all these succeeding years, devoted much of his time to the interests of the Society, aiding largely in gathering the 90,000 volumes and documents

in its Library, and editing its pamphlet issues and its eight volumes of Historical Collections. "It is," says Hon. T. W. Field, in his *Indian Bibliography*, "one of the noblest collections ever made by any Historical Society. It is a vast mass of original material, written mostly by border warriors, pioneers, *voyageurs*, and others, who saw the events of which they wrote. By far the largest portion relates to the aborigines who once occupied the territory. It is to the intelligence and zeal of the learned antiquary, Lyman C. Draper, that the public are indebted for this model of Historical Collections."

"The value of your Society's Collections," observes the scholarly Dr. J. G. Shea, "under their capable editorship, can only be appreciated by those who, like myself, have to use them in elucidating early history. That test shows their real importance and worth, which may not appear to any ordinary reader. They are valuable contributions to history, and form an imposing array." In reviewing these volumes, the *New England Historic-Genealogical Register*, for July, 1880, remarks: "These eight volumes contain a rich collection of articles and information relating to the history, genealogy and antiquities of the State of Wisconsin, together with biographies of her distinguished citizens who have deceased; and their publication reflects abundant credit upon the Secretary of the Society through all these years, Mr. Lyman C. Draper."

"No person in the North-west," said the *Chicago Post*, of June 2d, 1877, "has excelled Lyman C. Draper, Secretary of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, in solid contributions to historical literature. Through his zeal and efforts, that Society is second to none of like character in the Union. Its Library has a national reputation, and its Collections, edited by Mr. Draper, have been pronounced by competent authority to be unequaled by those of any similar organization in the country. The State of Wisconsin honors herself, and

illustrates the superior character of her population, by the continued and liberal support she has given to her Historical Society. The result is a Library of great size and richness, and a collection of historical publications of incalculable importance."

Prof. James D. Butler, in his *Historical Sketch of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, appended to President Whitford's *History of Education in Wisconsin*, thus speaks of Mr. Draper's connection with the Society: "Mr. Draper may be called the Perpetual Secretary. His name appears signed to every Annual Report from the first to the last, now these twenty-two years. He has also been perpetually at work, not only as Secretary, but as the factotum of the association. He has raised money for it not only at home, but from the most unlooked-for sources abroad. He has found rare and curious documents, which rich antiquarians had failed to find, and often procured them for his treasury without money and without price. He is understood to have bequeathed his own collection, which is without an equal in manuscripts illustrative of Western annals, to the Society, that, having served it through life, he may continue to serve it after death."

"One specimen of Mr. Draper's success in raising money, is the so-called Society's Building Fund. He first set apart for this end small fees and gifts, saying they should accumulate by interest and begging, till it amounted to at least \$10,000. The project was laughed at even by those who pityingly gave it some trifle. But when last heard from, that Fund amounted to more than \$4,000, besides a section of land." This was written by Prof. Butler, in 1876. The Fund thus mentioned by him now exceeds \$8,000, besides a section of Texas land, and a bequest of \$1,000 not yet available.

A handsome volume could be filled with quotations from eminent men and prominent periodicals in regard to the value of Mr. Draper's labors in behalf of the Historical Society.

In his Annual Address before the Society, and in the presence of the Legislature, in 1869, Hon. Harlow S. Orton, now one of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the State, observed: "The indefatigable labors, under the fostering care of the State, of our invaluable and worthy Corresponding Secretary, Lyman C. Draper, have accomplished grand and magnificent results for our Society. He is a small and feeble man, and we may not long enjoy the active benefits of his correspondence and labors. While we have him, we should value and encourage him—he is worth his weight in gold to this Society and State." "Stand your ground," wrote Gov. C. C. Washburn, in 1877, "and the people will stand by you. There is no institution in Wisconsin that the people should be more proud of than the Historical Society. To you is the honor greatly due for building it up to its present great proportions."

"The State Historical Society of Wisconsin," said the *Louisville Monthly Magazine*, of June, 1879, "is a good example of what can be done by systematic, persevering work in the establishment of a Library. It presents imposing strength. It has overcome all obstacles, and can now be safely assured of its prosperity as long as the State of Wisconsin exists. Its enemies in its infancy can now recognize it as one of the most potent agencies that have made Wisconsin a great State in—how few years! We unhesitatingly declare it a greater honor to have been identified in promoting the welfare of such a Society than any to be obtained in political life. All honor to Wisconsin!"

Not a few of the Historical Societies of the country, aware of the large degree of prosperity which has attended the Wisconsin Society, have, in their incipient stages, applied to Mr. Draper for advice and suggestions as to the best methods of success. These requests have not come from one quarter alone, but from different sections of the country,

especially in the South and West, where such institutions had not previously been organized; or, if they had an existence, it was merely in name. As an instance, we cite the newly-formed Historical Society of Nova Scotia. Its Secretary, J. T. Bulmer, Esq., wrote, in May, 1878, saying: "Col. Brantz Mayer, President of the Maryland Historical Society, recently advised me as follows: 'Lyman C. Draper, my old friend, at Madison, Wis., is *the* model, in my poor judgment, for all Historical Societies, founders and administrators. Open your correspondence with him, without delay, and tell him I suggested to you to do so. He is the most judicious and liberal of men.'"

In this case, as in others, Mr. Draper took much pains in urging first an application, as strongly backed as possible, to the Legislature of the Province, for a *permanent* appropriation of money, for a yearly grant of Government publications for exchanges, and for such further aid in rooms, stationery, etc., as the Province could supply; together with appropriate suggestions for objects of collection from the public generally, and how best to secure them. In due time, Mr. Bulmer wrote gratefully, that he and his friends had followed Mr. Draper's suggestions, and had secured a permanent Government appropriation, and other favors. And so of the Minnesota, Iowa, and Kentucky Historical Societies, and other similar organizations.

In the fall of 1857, Mr. Draper was chosen State Superintendent of Public Instruction, serving at the head of that department during the years 1858 and 1859, bringing order out of chaos, and in every way possible rendering the public schools of the State efficient and useful. He visited several of the State Superintendents of Schools, and leading educators of the country; among them Horace Mann, Hon. Henry Barnard, Presidents Wayland and Sears, and Rev. Dr. Egerton Ryer-

son, of Canada, to consult them with reference to the most desirable plan for popular Libraries as an adjunct to the Public School system, aiming to reach the points wherein they had succeeded in other States and Canada, as well as the causes of their failure, where they had practically failed of success. It was found that the District Library system, by the smallness of the collections and the worthlessness of the books, had inspired no enthusiasm, nor accomplished any perceptible good results.

With these lights before him, Mr. Draper proposed to the Legislature in his first Annual Report, that a Township Library system be created, by setting apart for that purpose one-tenth of the School Fund income, and imposing one-tenth of a mill tax on the taxable property in the State. That a competent State Board be chosen to select and approve the books, and contract for them at the lowest wholesale rates; and where the townships were large, empowering the local boards to subdivide the Libraries into two or more parts, and by rotation have them go the rounds of the township. In this way, instead of having half a dozen or a dozen feeble Libraries in the several districts of the township, there would be one strong Library, largely increased each successive year, and made up of the choicest works in every department of literature, and procured at the lowest rates. A law was at once enacted for raising a Library Fund in 1859, after a full discussion of the subject, and passed with scarcely a show of opposition. The first year a fund of \$88,784.78 had been raised for Library purposes, when the great war tornado of 1861 burst upon the country, and the Legislature, without due reflection and unwisely, repealed the Library Law, and transferred the money to the School and General Funds, so that the latter might aid in equipping our first regiments for the war.

Gov. Randall, in his Annual Message in January, 1859,

thus spoke of Mr. Draper's Report: "The Superintendent of Public Instruction has made a very voluminous and able Report. It indicates great thought and labor, and will be of great value. It exhibits better than has ever been done before, the condition of our schools, the character of our system, and the resources at command for their support." Horace Mann, who has justly been styled the Apostle of Free Schools, said of Mr. Draper's Report: "It presents the most persuasive and effective argument in favor of education that has ever been offered to the world." Fine words these, coming from so noble a source.

The State Legislative Investigating Committee, who annually examined into all the Wisconsin State Departments, gave through their Chairman, Hon. M. M. Davis, the following testimony in their Report, in 1859, to Mr. Draper's efficiency and faithfulness as a public officer: "The examination into the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has been brought down to February, 1859, and the committee are most happy to find that the present Superintendent, Lyman C. Draper, has established a new order of things from that heretofore found in the management of that department. All the duties of the office are discharged with promptness; accurate records of all the transactions are kept. Great credit is due Mr. Draper for the industry and efficiency with which he has discharged the duties of his responsible office."

In Hon. W. C. Whitford's *Historical Sketch of Education in Wisconsin*, prepared for the National Centennial of 1876, occurs this highly complimentary paragraph: "Hon. Lyman C. Draper, of Madison, was Superintendent in the years 1858 and 1859. He had been for many years the efficient Secretary of the State Historical Society. He collected reliable statistics, showing the actual condition of the public schools; and he organized the work of his department,

which had been sadly neglected. The efficient system of conducting Teachers' Institutes was inaugurated while he was in office, and has continued in force until the present time. He procured, during his term, the passage of an excellent law for establishing Town School Libraries. He wrote largely upon this subject in his Reports, and awakened much interest for it in different parts of the State. After a fund of \$88,784.78 had accumulated for the benefit of these Libraries, the law was very unwisely repealed in 1861, and the money transferred to the School and General Funds. It is due to this enterprise, and to this indefatigable laborer, that this money should be refunded by the State, and this law revived. If this measure had been put in force, and prosecuted vigorously for a few years, it would have furnished an excellent basis for the introduction of the Township System of managing schools."

The late President Daniel Read, of the Missouri State University, in some remarks at the Librarians' Convention at Philadelphia, in October, 1876, said: "The Hon. Lyman C. Draper, of Madison, Wis., who is well known as practically the founder of the Wisconsin State Historical Library, when elected State Superintendent of Education, brought forward as his great measure, a scheme of School Libraries; and the Legislature, responding to his views, provided over \$88,000 to carry it out, which, however, upon the war breaking out, was diverted to the immediate necessities of the times. No measure is more popular or more generally acceptable with all classes than this provision for the intellectual food of the people. It has proved so everywhere." We can most heartily indorse the words of Dr. Read and President Whitford, and join the latter in the earnest hope that Mr. Draper may live to see his ideas in regard to Township Libraries realized. They are a lasting monument to his wisdom and patriotism.

A zealous watch-care over the School Fund also engaged

his attention. "We must award to Mr. Draper," said the *Janesville Gazette and Free Press*, of May 8, 1858, "great credit for his able and clear School Report upon a subject of vital importance to the welfare of the people of this State. His Report is timely, too, submitted, as it is, when there is an effort making to divert a large portion of the School Fund to other purposes. He takes strong ground against the transfer of another twenty-five per cent. of the Swamp Land Fund to the Drainage Fund, which would take from the School Fund fifty per cent. of the Swamp Land Fund. We hope the members of the Legislature will study well the facts and suggestions of Mr. Draper, and listen to his appeal in behalf of the two hundred and fifty thousand children now living in our midst, and of the millions yet unborn. 'Whoever,' says Mr. Draper, 'attempts to divert any portion of our sacred School Fund from its consecrated purposes of education, should feel that he is treading on holy ground.' We may add, too, that it is dangerous ground for all who desire to stand well with the voters of this State hereafter. We do not hesitate to say, that after the forcible exposition of this matter given by the Superintendent, no man is fit to be a legislator who will vote to increase the Drainage Fund at the expense of the School Fund."

During the term of his School Superintendency, Mr. Draper was *ex-officio* one of the Regents of the State University, and of the Normal School Board; and labored, with others, in rendering the University more efficient and more useful to the rising generation. He exerted himself to secure the labors and experience of that great public educator, Henry Barnard, at the head of the University and Normal School system of Wisconsin; and Dr. Barnard, for a time, till his health failed him, gave a new impetus to all our educational matters, and especially to the Normal Institutes. As the University Library had been neglected, Mr. Draper proposed that

a specific sum be permanently set apart annually from the University Fund, for the increase and building-up of the Library, which was adopted. Though no longer in its immediate service, Mr. Draper is still one of the most steadfast friends of the University, and no man takes more delight in its progress and usefulness. We also know from personal acquaintance with the facts, that Mr. Draper was largely instrumental in securing to the University the services of the late Dr. S. H. Carpenter, one of the most efficient professors the University ever had.

When Mr. Draper was chosen Superintendent of Schools, the lovers of border history everywhere regretted that he had been tempted from his field of antiquarian labor. Among others, the late Hon. Henry S. Randall, who had served as Superintendent of Schools of New York, and the well-known author of an excellent life of Jefferson, and other valuable works, wrote thus freely and pleasantly to his friend:

"I am one of the fierce 'Democracie;' but, upon my word, I am disposed to regret your success. The field of a State Superintendent of Instruction is a fine one; but there is a good deal of timber for good officers of this stamp, compared with that of historical investigators and archæologists. Our early unwritten history—and, oh! how little of it *is* written! is passing away. This bustling, material generation is scrambling for bread and larger farms. Another generation will have lost about all our unwritten history; that is, all except the *pseudo* traditions, which we see sometimes worked up by sentimental fools. And of all the contemptible lies, those of history are the least excusable.

"There is a rich field of history on our own borders. The man who collects and writes it must have peculiar qualifications. Besides being a clear, vivid writer, he must have a peculiar taste in that direction. He must have untiring

industry; he must have *enthusiasm*. He must be ready to dig as faithfully and patiently to bring out a border incident as Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck would have dug to determine the foundations of a prætorium! Yesterday I would have said, '*Thou art the man!*' But you have turned politician and office-holder. At any rate, you have been guilty of polygamy in your hobbies! You have laid Boone and Clark, and those border heroes whom it makes my blood tingle to think of, *on the shelf*. Their-memory is going like snow in June, and you have put them off to a more convenient season. And then, too, there is that State Historical Society, which I expected to see made one of the *features* of your giant young State, half abandoned!

"Rely upon it, my friend, polygamy won't do when you wish to beget great offspring. Enthusiasm won't bear dividing. And—I being the judge—you have sacrificed the major to the minor. He who can *save* our *true* border history, can, in the first place, get his bread thereby, and he can also enroll his name high among the literary benefactors of mankind. He can make himself an American Camden—a household word among scholars and the people, to all generations. *I hope you will get back to your task as soon as you properly can.*"

Mr. Draper has published several important works; but, as we look over his list of publications, we feel a painful regret that he has not yet produced more from his extraordinary rich mine of history and biography. As already indicated, he possesses the material for a whole series of most absorbingly interesting works; and looking at the *petit* done, and the *un-done* vast, in the matter of giving the public the results of his extensive collections and researches, we can not help praying that the hand of time may rest gently on him for many years to come, and enable him to give his many great border heroes a suitable dress for the publishers.

Besides the eight volumes of Collections of the State Historical Society, several pamphlets, and two elaborate School Reports, he produced, in 1869, aided by W. A. Croffut, a thorough work of over eight hundred pages, entitled, *The Helping Hand: An American Home Book, for Town and Country*, devoted to farm matters, stock, fruit culture, and domestic economy, which was highly commended by competent judges. This work is, for some reason, bound up in litigation, and has not been made accessible to those for whom it was intended. While we are not competent to estimate the merits of this work, we are persuaded by the criticisms passed upon it by those who are well up in agriculture and domestic economy, that it is a work of great value; but when Mr. Draper showed us a handsomely bound copy of it, and mournfully unveiled to our mind the litigious bonds that hold it closed from the public gaze, we could not help rejoicing that the author had gotten a practical lesson in polygamy. The shoemaker should stick to his last, and the American public can not afford to let Mr. Draper grow rich out of prosy volumes on agriculture, though the work be ever so well done. We trust he did not fail to see the intervention of the *hand* of Providence in the fate of the *Helping Hand*.

He has now in press a work in his own special line—a work that in some measure indicates what rich treasures he is able to bring forth from his unique Library and remarkable mind. The book is entitled *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, and sheds much new light on that brilliant episode of our Revolutionary history. It is being published by P. G. Thomson, of Cincinnati, and will soon be in the trade. He has completed a carefully prepared volume on the so-called *Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*, of May, 1775. A literary critic who has examined the manuscript, thus

speaks of the merits of this work: "The author has been obliged to go over an immense mass of evidence, and slowly disentangle the knot which so many others have tried to cut. He has done his work thoroughly, and has produced an exhaustive monograph, which, if printed, is destined to settle the question for all time." He has also in manuscript a large work on *Border Forays and Adventures*, in the preparation of which he had the assistance of C. W. Butterfield, author of *Crawford's Expedition*, and other works, embracing the period from De Soto's romantic explorations down to the present century, and extending from Canada and the frontiers of New York to the Gulf of Mexico. Each chapter treats of a distinct subject, and treats it thoroughly, and is written largely from hitherto unpublished materials—another instance of the kind of coin that can be produced in Mr. Draper's wonderful mint.

Thirty years ago, Granville College, Ohio, conferred on Mr. Draper the honorary degree of Master of Arts; and, in 1871, the University of Wisconsin that of LL. D., in recognition of his services in behalf of the historical literature of the country, and his unflagging efforts in rearing at the capital of Wisconsin a great Public Library for the benefit of scholars and investigators for all coming time. He is either an honorary or corresponding member of the principal Historical Societies of the country; and, since 1876, one of the Honorary Vice-Presidents of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society.

Mr. Draper has from the first of his antiquarian career, been a man of much system and persistent industry, never becoming wearied or discouraged in whatever he undertakes. This is one of the great secrets of his success. A proof of his thoroughly unselfish nature is the generous use he makes of his rich stores of historical acquisitions. He has freely—

indeed, too freely for his own interest—aided fellow-laborers with facts and materials, and oftentimes without a proper acknowledgment on their part, so that when he subsequently had occasion to use the same facts, he might, to the uninitiated reader, seem guilty of plagiarism, when in reality he was only reclaiming what was honestly his own, and for the acquisition of which he had labored and toiled as few have the ability and patience to do. Still, many authors have acknowledged their indebtedness to Mr. Draper, and the volumes in which he is mentioned would, if collected, make a very respectable Library, containing such works as Schoolcraft's *History and Condition of the Indian Tribes*, *Documentary History of New York*, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Parkman's *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*, *History of Braddock's Expedition*, Charles Campbell's *History of Virginia*, Perkins' *Western Annals*, Peck's *Life of Boone* in Spark's *American Biography*, Ramsey's *History of Tennessee*, Neill's *Minnesota*, and countless others.

In his interesting volume of *Tah-gah-jute* or *Logan and Cresap*, the late Col. Brantz Mayer observes: "Mr. Draper, the distinguished and indefatigable Secretary of the Wisconsin Historical Society, is one of our ablest border historians and scholars. No student of American border life in early days, has accumulated so large, various, and valuable a stock of original manuscripts and printed authorities on the subject as has this kind and enlightened scholar. No one opens his treasures with more generosity to his friends and co-laborers. I may be permitted also to express the hope—in which I am sure American historians will cordially unite—that Mr. Draper will soon commence the publication of that series of pioneer histories and biographies, upon which it is known he has been employed for so many years."

"We are looking anxiously," observed the *Chicago Post*

in 1877, "for Mr. Draper's long-deferred *Life of Gen. George Rogers Clark*. No other living man has the material and knowledge he possesses for the work, and he is growing old. It would be a great loss if there should be too long delay in bringing out this work, which no one can doubt will be exceptionally valuable."

"It is to be hoped," wrote ex-Gov. B. F. Perry of South Carolina, in 1878, "that the Hon. Lyman C. Draper, of Wisconsin, who has been engaged for years in collecting material for the *Life of Gen. Thomas Sumter*, will meet with success. He is Secretary of the Historical Society of Wisconsin, and a literary writer and scholar of eminence. When I had the pleasure of meeting him several years since, I was amazed at the minute accuracy of his information in regard to the Revolutionary history of South Carolina, and all of her distinguished men." The promised volume on *Sumter and his Men* will prove, from its episodes of the old French and Indian war, and its racy details of the Tory warfare in the South during the Revolution, a work of unusual interest.

William A. Croffut, at one time associated with Mr. Draper in literary labors, wrote an appreciative sketch of him in the New York *Graphic* of Oct. 16th, 1875. From this we will, before closing, make a few extracts. "Down the street," says Mr. Croffut, "to his residence, I strayed to see the man who had built up a Library that ranks among the few mammoth collections in our country—one of the very richest in American history. Here I found him, studying, writing, accumulating—certainly the most remarkable literary antiquary in the United States. His own historical appetite dates from his boyhood, and for over forty years he has constantly indulged it with fresh food. Instinctively seizing on a few representative names, Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, Andrew Lewis, Simon Kenton, Thomas Sumter, Tecumseh, Brant,

Brady, and the Wetzels, the centers of pioneer history of the West, he has, for two-score years, followed up every clue, till he has gathered in his little hut a complete manuscript history of the development of the West. His investigations have been as thorough as they have been wide. He follows the trail of a fact with the persistence of an Indian, and the scent of a hound.

“To collect these materials, he has traveled more than sixty thousand miles since 1840, visiting aged pioneers and Indian fighters, the men who cleared the woods and laid the foundations of the State. Living on a meager salary, and much of the time with no income whatever, he has traveled thousands of miles on foot. He has made several journeys on foot, going on a single jaunt eight hundred miles, carrying his knapsack. This involved great hardship and self-denial, and not a little danger. His feet became sore at one time, compelling him to make his way on hands and knees to a settlement. He came near losing his life on several occasions, swimming swollen streams, capsizing in stages, and caught in the snagging of steamboats, but he hazarded everything to clear up an obscure event in the life of one of his border heroes.

“His enthusiasm and keen scent have yielded to no impediment. The walls of his Library are hung with trophies and relics of his extended search, and on the shelves are packed two hundred and fifty manuscript volumes of crude history, nearly all original. Concerning the life and conquests of Gen. G. R. Clark, ‘the Washington of the West,’ he possesses twenty-five manuscript volumes; ten relating to Boone and his ancestors, including Boone’s letters, his field notes of surveying, and his private memorandum and account-books. Another of Draper’s heroes is Gen. Simon Kenton, a noted border fighter, and companion of Clark and Boone, who was captured by the Indians, and several times escaped

the stake and faggot, and who was once tied on a wild colt, Mazeppa-like, and left to his fate in the pathless woods. Of Brady, the Wetzels, Brant, and Tecumseh, he has collected many volumes, and he has about a dozen volumes of manuscripts concerning Sumter, the Revolutionary hero of South Carolina, matter new and exhaustive.

"One other odd fact is, that Mr. Draper has published almost nothing. Unlike Plutarch, to whom I have compared him, he is naturally a gleaner rather than a compiler. He gathers facts and hoards them like a miser—not because he is secretive or fails to comprehend that they ought to be used, but because he takes more pleasure in collecting than in editing. He more keenly enjoys going forth afoot and searching every corner of the West for an old scrap of letter, or to find a lost link in the chain of some minor narrative, than to acquire either fame or money in publication. The love of accuracy and completeness is a passion with him.

"Dr. Draper is a small, wiry man, and, while his head and beard are silvery, his eye preserves the brightness, and his step the elasticity of youth. He has marvelous energy and persistence that never tire. Whatever may result as to working up his collections, he will enrich the future with his possessions; and when he passes away, he will leave behind him the merited fame of having done more than all other men put together toward restoring the lost history of the West."

"Seeing him now," says F. A. Moore, "it is hard to comprehend the secret force and energy that have inspired him through all these long and patient years." "Our wonder was," observes the well-known bibliographer, Joseph Sabin, "that a man of his slight *physique* could have accomplished a tithe of his work."

Such is a brief sketch of the man of whose collections Jared Sparks, thirty-five years ago, expressed his amazement

—since that time, they have been more than doubled; and whom the late Col. John McDonald, himself a pioneer, and author of *Border Sketches*, denominated “The Western Plutarch.” “I look forward,” writes Bancroft, the historian, “with eager and impatient curiosity for the appearance of your lives of Boone, of Clark, and of James Robertson, and so many others. Time is short—I wish to read them before I go hence. Pray do not delay; the country expects of you this service.”

We have quoted freely what others say of Mr. Draper, in order to show the eminent position he holds among the great scholars of our country who make American history their specialty, and hence are able to speak with authority on the value of his labors. We have given mere glimpses of the vast amount of praise that has been bestowed upon him; but, we trust, we have given enough to illustrate both the character and value of his labors, the caliber of the man, and the fair fame that belongs to his name throughout the country, and which is destined to last through all time. We feel deeply interested in the publication of his long-promised works. Just as mythology forms the background of the history of the nations of the Old World, so the American people can find the dawn of their existence in the New World radiant and glowing with the strange figures of the pioneers, whose lives will, in times to come, be commemorated in songs as weird and thrilling as those we read in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in the *Æneid*, the *Niblung* story, and the *Eddas*. Our pioneer history will be to those who come after us, what the achievements of Agamemnon and Menelaus, of Odysseus, of *Æneas*, Sigurd and Gunnar, and Helen and Brynhild were, and still are, to the Greeks, the Romans and the Teutons; but the heroic age of America will be more realistic, and for this our posterity will be largely indebted to such men as Lyman

C. Draper. In his collections there is food for many generations of Homers and Virgils, of skalds and bards and minnesingers. Our posterity will delight in the thrilling stories of Boone, of Clark, of Brady, of Sumter, and of other far-traveled heroes, who penetrated into the wild forests of Indiandom, and laid the foundations of the United States. *Tantæ molis erat Americanam condere gentem!*—and no easy task has it been for our friend Draper to gather up all the scattered records of the toils and sufferings of our Western fathers; but an immortal fame is his just reward.

Mr. Draper reminds the writer of this sketch most forcibly of the Iclander, Arne Magnusson, who was born in 1663 and died in 1730. He gained for himself a celebrated name—less by his writing, for, though he was remarkably familiar with the history and literature of his country, he found but little time for composing books,—than by the most astonishing zeal with which he collected manuscript chronicles, letters, and other documents illustrative of the history of the North. As a most untiring collector of Icelandic manuscripts, he was *facile princeps*. He was sent by the Danish Government from Copenhagen as a member of a commission to Iceland, whose duty it was to settle the registry of the land of that island. During his ten years' sojourn there, he employed himself in seeking old documents with an indefatigable energy, to which we have never known a parallel, excepting in the case of Mr. Draper. He did for old Norse literature what Archbishop Parker did for Anglo-Saxon literature, and what Mr. Draper has done for American border historical literature. Arne Magnusson was armed with a royal letter, commanding the Icelanders to deliver to him all they possessed in the shape of written documents. He did not wait, however, for the people to bring him their treasures, in obedience to the royal mandate; but, during those ten long

years, he traveled from house to house, hunting up manuscripts stored away in huge oak chests, the receptacles of the wardrobe, and everything accounted valuable by the peasantry. He peered carefully over the doors of the guest-chambers and in out-of-the-way nooks, in case a scrap of paper might peradventure lurk there. The harvest that he brought back to Copenhagen was simply extraordinary.

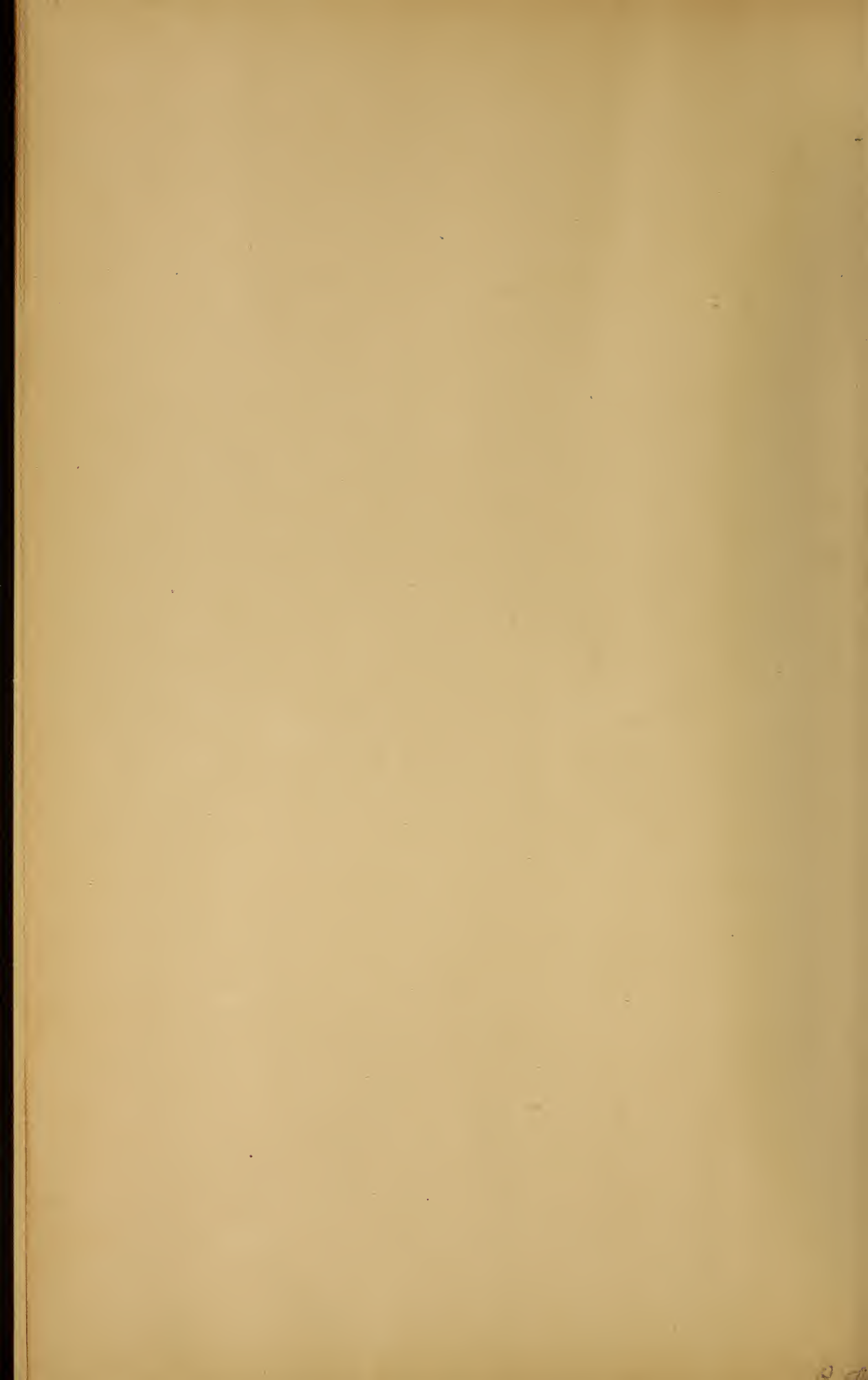
He also went to Norway, where he, in the same manner, visited countless houses, penetrating as far as to Norland, bringing back many precious manuscripts. His collection, unique in its kind, has never been surpassed in quantity or in value. Unfortunately, the larger portion of it was consumed by the disastrous fire which visited Copenhagen in 1728. What was saved, with what he was afterward able to add to it, he left, by will, to the University of Copenhagen, together with a sum of money to defray the expense of its publication. The result of this beneficence has been a goodly array of quarto volumes given to the world, containing all the chief early Icelandic works, each volume bearing on its title-page the representation of the illustrious founder of these historic and literary treasures. The so-called *Arne Magnusson Collection* is the most important of its kind ever made by a single individual; and when we consider that two-thirds was destroyed by fire, we can form some idea of what that loss must have been. To any one who knows how difficult it is to travel in Iceland, the parallel here drawn between Magnusson and Mr. Draper can not fail to be interesting. While Col. McDonald and Mr. Croffut have denominated Lyman C. Draper the *Plutarch of the West*, I am inclined to style him the *Arne Magnusson of America*; and I only wish he may, in time, make a similar disposition of his large collection of manuscripts, covering, as they do, the whole sweep of the Ohio, Cumberland, Tennessee, and Mississippi valleys, with

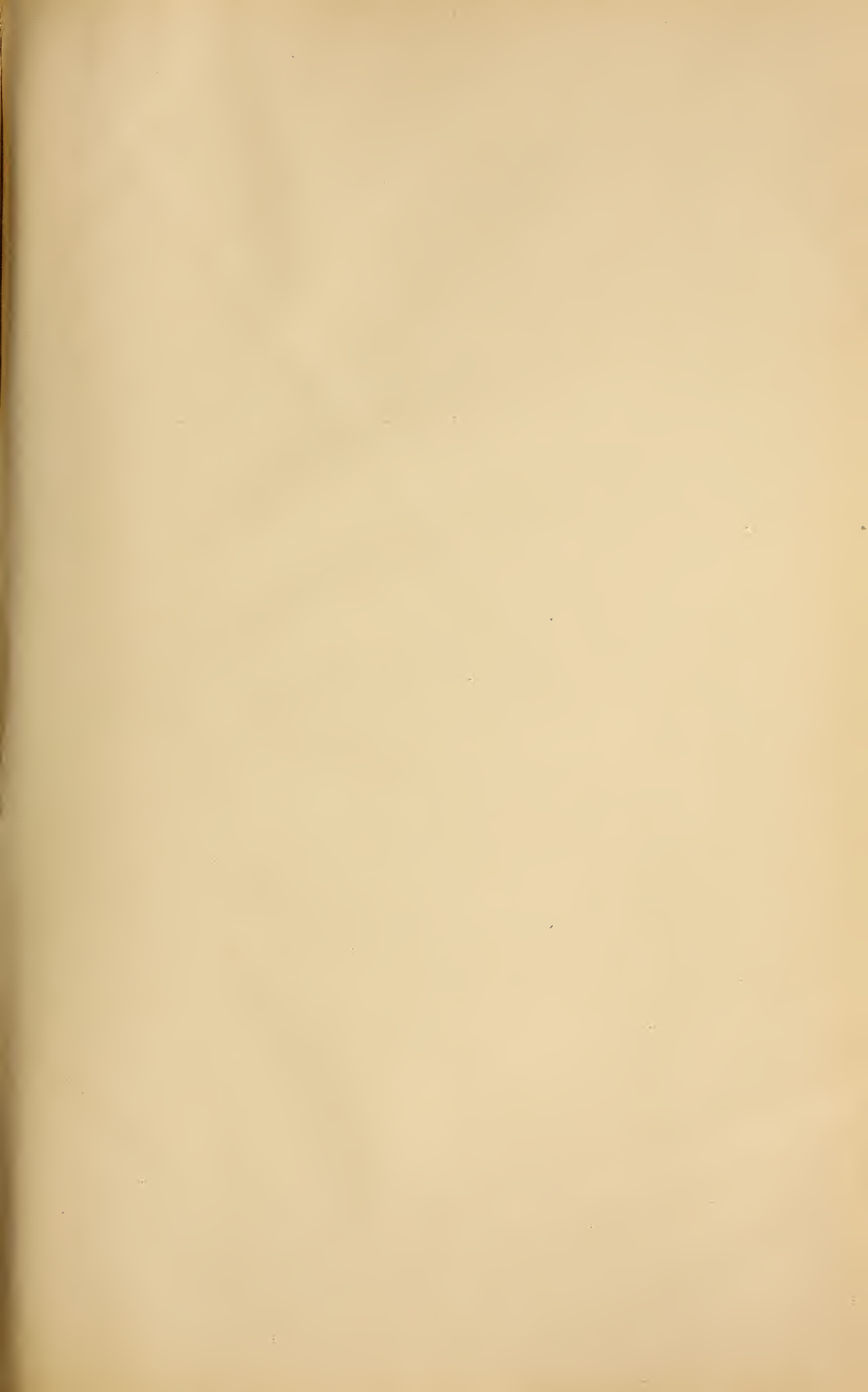
much of the border Revolutionary history of New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

I have known Mr. Draper intimately for many years, and have learned to admire his many excellent qualities. With vigor, fidelity, and marked success, he has devoted his life to the study of American history, and the interests of the Wisconsin State Historical Society. In public and in private life, he has always been found genial, straightforward, clear-headed, and, above all, unostentatious. In the field of Anglo-American settlement, Revolutionary and border wars, and pioneer history generally, he has but few, if any, peers in the country.

It is proper to state that, in the preparation of this sketch, the materials have been gathered partly from a notice of him found in Tuttle's *Illustrated History of Wisconsin*, published in 1875, partly from a sketch of him in the *New York Graphic*, published October 16th, 1875, partly from pamphlets, magazines, and other printed sources, and partly from notes furnished me by Mr. Draper himself. All dates and facts can, therefore, be vouched for as thoroughly reliable. It is a matter to be regretted that, in a sketch so limited, many interesting points in the life of this energetic and scholarly man have either received but a passing notice, or, what is still worse, been altogether omitted.

We trust, however, that the few facts here presented may serve to stimulate young men to imitate so noble an example. Mr. Draper has, by his success, demonstrated to all aspiring young men what human genius, enterprise, industry, and faithful devotion can accomplish.





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